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IN THE

SPEECH

OF

HON. C. W. CATHCART, OF INDIANA,

ON

THE OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1846

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THE OREGON QUESTION.

The resolution from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, requiring the President to notify Great Britain of the intention of the United States to terminate the joint occupancy of Oregon, and to abrogate the convention of 1827, being under consideration in Committee of the Whole—

Mr. CATHCART obtained the floor, and spoke as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: My life has been one continual struggle, and yet I must be permitted to say, that I have passed through no scene heretofore so strikingly, strongly colored with serio-comical features as that which we have witnessed in this House during the last few weeks; and I can conceive of nothing so ludicrous, to a disinterested bystander, as the simultaneous effort of some dozen or two of members to obtain the floor, as each more fortunate competitor concluded his hour speech. If our honest constituents could drop in upon us and see and hear the curious devices adopted by many to obtain your response, Mr. Chairman, I am sure, though they might laugh at the farce, they would pity the actors.

I see around me already many anxious faces, "waiting their turn," and as the best evidence of my feeling appreciation of their situation, I will endeavor to be as brief as possible, and only regret that, when I shall have enjoyed my allotted time, but one of a host of clever fellows can be accommodated.

Should I say that modesty—a characteristic for which a western politician is not apt to receive or be allowed much credit—has prevented me from obtruding my crude opinions upon the committee until the present moment, I fear that I might be considered as trespassing upon your indulgence. But so it is; and to say that I did not feel the disadvantage of my present position, coming upon the floor at this late hour, would be denying to myself simple justice. After the "feast of reason and the flow of soul" which has been brought to the "harvest-home" in this debate by those able gentlemen who have gone before me, I now, almost at the eleventh hour, come in as the humble gleaner in a well-reaped field.

Poetry and prose, history and fiction, have afforded their rich contributions, wherever they might "point a moral or adorn a tale." Even those convenient sources of poetic fancy, the American eagle and the British lion, have been so often drawn upon, that the roar of the one and the scream of the other now fall powerless upon the ears of this committee. From the apex of the Alleghany to the summit of Mount Hood, the

bird of America has so often been made to take flight, that his shadow may be said to have worn a trail across the basin of the Mississippi; and the poor lord of the beasts has become so familiar with the point of a hickory pole and of an ash splinter, that he has slunk away to his lair, and there let him lie for the balance of my allotted hour.

Poetry has been all the rage in this debate; and since it is said that a man had as well be out of the world as out of the fashion, I too must use a very little; for really there has been but little left. I believe there yet remains some of the poetry of the Roundheads and Cavaliers, a few of the Psalms, and the old ditty of Barbara Allen. One thing of the latter I shall monopolize, and leave the balance to those who may come after me. Well then, sir, "'Twas in the merry month of May," in the year of our Lord 1844, that two conventions or political gatherings were held at Baltimore; the one—got up with all magnificence and display, and surrounded with pageants, bull-baits, and buffalo hunts—seemed called together by the high priests of the self-styled Whig party—for what? Let their deeds answer. They took Clay, and made unto themselves a graven image, and called upon all the people to fall down and worship it; but they found themselves in the predicament of him who "called the spirits from the vasty deep," and the spirits would not come! They stayed away. Alas, alas, poor Yorick! But the other—what did they do? Why, sir, they took for their standard-bearer (if we are to believe those who have gone before us) a third-rate man—a man unknown to fame, and undeserving the confidence of *any party*. Who does not remember their taunting query: "Who is James K. Polk? Who is James K. Polk?"

How strange a duty will devolve upon the future historian when he shall come to record the events of the last few years. What have we seen? What do we *now* see in this House? Those very gentlemen, who were so very ignorant about Mr. Polk a few short months ago, are now ready—*ay, anxious*—to place the destinies of this people upon the grave question of war or peace in his hands. You are told, sir, most pathetically of the horrors of war; that under its dark frowns all that are blessed and worth blessing on earth must wither and perish like chaff before a seven-times heated furnace; that to give this notice is war. And yet these immaculate apostles of consistency are willing to vote this tremendous power into the hands of this very same James K. Polk! Let them repeat their query, and from their own mouths shall they be answered. James K. Polk is so high in the confidence of the

Whig party, that they anxiously seek to place the sword which, leaping from its scabbard, will bring to the mighty conflict two of the greatest nations of the earth, in his hands. So much, sir, for a Whig answer to a Whig query.

But what said we? When, pending that election, which *fixed one fact* at least in our political history—and that was, that the people could select their own candidate as well as elect him—the question was asked of us, “Who is James K. Polk?” I can speak for myself, sir, and I would hope for every democrat, when I say that I told them in brief that he was politically a sound democrat; morally, not only unsuspected, but above suspicion; and that he, and his party with him, above all, were in favor of the occupation of Oregon and the annexation of Texas; that he had the firmness so to avow himself, when others were trimming their sails to catch the political blast; and that to this he owes his present elevated position cannot be denied.

What said the Baltimore convention, which nominated him, on this subject? Here it is, sir:

“Resolved, That our title to the whole of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England; and that the re-occupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas, at the earliest practicable period, are great American measures, which this convention recommends to the cordial support of the democracy of the Union.”

Mr. Polk was elected on this issue, advanced it in his inaugural, and again in his Message, and, with a view to carry it out, recommends this notice to be given. And the question is put to us as the representatives of the American people, whether we will, or will not, respond, not only to him, sir, but to the American people, who, with warm hearts and strong hands, bid us go on and fulfil their decree? It is said that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Then we to the backward, for the indignant frowns of millions of freemen are upon them.

It may not be disguised that there is diversity of opinion—shall I say, sir, upon the *modus operandi* by which we shall acquire the Oregon territory:—and diversity, too, among those who were so unanimous upon its twin measure, the annexation of Texas. And this calls to mind, sir, a very chaste and classic remark of a gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. PENDLETON.] I quote his words, sir: “It was said early in the discussion that this Oregon question, and that of Texas, were born and cradled in the Baltimore Convention of 1844; twins, as my honorable friend from Massachusetts says, *two*, he might with more precise accuracy have said, out of a very numerous *litter* of as monstrous political absurdities as any conclave, by so rapid a parturition, ever *spawned* upon the world.” A *litter* spawned!

Why, Mr. Chairman, I am reminded by this of the fact that, in the district which the gentleman represents, instead of feeding upon the wholesome flesh of the hog and other quadrupeds, their main subsistence is the “Potomac robin,” alias the hering; and in this fishy school the gentleman seems to have learned his ideas of reproduction, and he has given us a specimen. I am told that there is a great difference “before and after meat,” or rather fish, among the people of the sterile

knobs along the Potomac river; and I only regret that, for the credit of a portion of the Old Dominion, the gentleman had not deferred his speech until after the fishing season. The gentleman has given us, too, another version of the story of “Jonah’s swallowing the whale,” when he speaks of Mr. Polk as one of this *litter spawned*. Why, sir, he must be a great fellow for fish, this Mr. Polk; he has swallowed the leviathan of whiggery, ears and all, without grease or pinning back; and some of the gentleman’s friends are yet waiting his second advent!

The gentleman is pleased to advert to what he calls the angry and contending factions of the Democratic party upon this question of notice. His “hope is father to the thought;” he need not lay the flattering unction to his soul that we will so far gratify him and his friends, and so far prove recreant to the great trusts reposed in us by a confiding and generous constituency, as to array ourselves in factions, and to tear down the fair temple so well begun.

But should we do so, sir, what is he and his partisan coadjutors to take by that motion? Are they united? Who does not remember the bitterness of his remarks to some of his able fellow-laborers in the cause of modern whiggery—those who were with him in keeping Texas out, the tariff up, getting Mr. Clay in if they could, and in every sense were as Simon Pure Whigs as himself? The phantom which seems to oppress the vivid imagination of the gentleman is the idea of a scramble among the Democracy for the next Presidency, while he has to stand by, as we say in the West, “like a bound boy at a husking.”

The gentleman asks how are we to meet Great Britain in Oregon; or, in other words, how are we to get there? He understands the *fishy route*—the route by sea; that is perfectly familiar to him; and he suggests good and valid reasons showing why we cannot go that way. But, sir, there is another route, which I shall designate the *grassy route*; and this route is to him incomprehensible; and why? Because as pork is displaced over the river by fish, so grass is by sedge; and he has not found out the many useful purposes to which it may be applied. Now, let me tell the gentleman and this committee, that from the prairie on which I reside, near Lake Michigan, to the Columbia, with very brief intervals, you find a natural mantle of the most luxuriant verdure covering the face of the country. That in the summer season, any number of cattle—thousands and tens of thousands—may be subsisted along the route; that, with their aid, our hardy western riflemen can transport all the munitions, &c., necessary to a successful campaign; and that they would pour down upon the minions of British power from the slope of the mountains, as Napoleon did upon the sunny plains of Italy. The toils of the chase and the hardships of a frontier life have brought into existence a race of men particularly well qualified for such an adventure—and they will do it!

A word more, and I will leave that gentleman. He has wittily alluded to my colleague’s celebrated “American multiplication table,” and has enjoyed a fling at our worthy Chief Magistrate and Secretary of State. He says that he can see no way by which we can acquire Oregon, except by the operation of this table; and that he is really apprehen-

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sive that if we have to depend upon the two gen-
tlemen above-mentioned, that Queen Victoria and
Mr. Peel will beat us at that. Something in that,
Mr. Chairman; but how forcibly could Mr. Polk
revert upon him, "And thou, too, Brutus?" Why,
sir, I am told that that gentleman's lonesome hearth
is as sad a picture as ever was seen of the effects—
sir, the want of effects of "Love's labor lost."

Now, sir, to come back to these twin measures,
or two measures, if you please. The one has been
consummated—Texas is annexed—she is one of
us, and we are anxiously waiting for the advent
among us of her representatives in both ends of
this Capitol.

What Democrat from the South rebuked the ar-
dor of the West in the carrying of this measure? I
appeal to you, gentlemen of the South: Did you
not then feel proud to call us brothers? And did
not your pulse beat high as you saw our undaun-
ted front, and the vigor with which we pressed on
the column? Did we halt by the way side and say,
the time is not yet? Did we pretend to be with
you as to the end, but cavil as to the means? No,
sir, no! But from prairie and wood, hill and dale,
the Democracy sent up their battle-cry—Texas and
Oregon, Oregon and Texas. Texas we have—
Oregon we look for. Will you "keep the word of
promise to the car, and break it to the hope?" I
know, as a body, you will not; but I should be
proud to see the entirety of the gallant South lead-
ing the van in the assertion of our right to Oregon,
and in the adoption of the measures recommended
by a southern President for the assertion of that
right. How, then, would be rolled back upon the
disunionists of the North, the grave charge brought
against you, "that you were clannish in your feel-
ings and sectional in your patriotism."

And now, sir, I hope my motives may be prop-
erly appreciated in adverting to the remarks of
some of the gentlemen from the South, who have
differed from the majority of us upon this question.

The spirit of the West, its enthusiastic devotion
to the glory and grandeur of our common country,
and the enlargement of the bounds of civilization,
and the expansion of our republican institutions,
has been called a war spirit; and we have been read
lectures upon the horrors of war, and the blessings
of peace; and told that by the decisive action which
we are about taking we hazard everything and can
gain nothing; that wisdom dictates a course of
"masterly inactivity."

Sir, was it by this supine course that we gained
our present independent existence as the freest and
happiest people on earth? Was it by inactivity that
we sealed our title to be considered one of the first,
and greatest, and bravest people under heaven's
sun?—in a word, was it by masterly inactivity that
we acquired Texas? No, sir, no! But by action
—energetic action!

Peace is one of the greatest, and best, and holiest
gifts of Heaven. Never shall I talk lightly of its
blessings. Would to Heaven that its benignant
smile might forever rest upon all the children of
men!

But, sir, it need not be disguised—the days of
the millennium have not yet arrived. We must
occasionally brave war and all its horrors, or sink
into contumely and contempt, and become a by-
word and a reproach among the nations of the
earth.

We are asked, sir, if we expect, by giving this
notice, to dispossess England? And again, if we
suppose that we can effect our purpose by reading
law to the British troops? Did we not read "our
law" to Mexico, backed as she was by both Eng-
land and France? And did we not inscribe the sec-
ond edition in legible characters, by the foot-prints
of an American soldiery in the sands of Corpus
Christi? What western man then held back?
What western man—or, I should rather say, west-
ern democrat—then held the cold shoulder to you,
and called this a southern measure? None, sir;
none, at least, in the gallant State which I have the
honor in part to represent.

So bitterly opposed are the leaders of the Whig
party in the section of country from which I hail,
to the reduction of the tariff to the revenue stand-
ard, and so vehement is their hate towards South
Carolina for the stand she has taken upon this
subject, that their bitterest term of reproach, as
they consider it, has been to designate a Democrat
a South Carolina politician. Sir, I have borne this
name in latitude forty-one and a half for years;
but I really have been apprehensive, lately, that I
shall be compelled to ask my Whig friends to
amend the title. I can stand a good deal from the
gallant palmetto State—my sympathies have been
with her. I have seen her fields deserted, and
her palaces made desolate, by the iron heel of the
oppressor. I have seen the advantages which God
has given her transferred to regions less favored
by nature, under the operation of oppressive enact-
ments; and, after a long and arduous struggle, I
have come here now instructed to do her justice.
Texas, Oregon, and the tariff, with the other great
measures now before us, shall each in their turn
receive or meet with, from me, such action as an
honorable, and just, and *bona fide* interpretation
of the issues placed by our national convention
before the American people shall require at our
hands.

But this doctrine of "masterly inactivity;" I
cannot find it in the proceedings of the Democratic
convention. I may, however, see room for its in-
ference from the neglect to mention Texas and
Oregon in the proceedings of the Whig convention;
but, sir, that is not the chart which I steer by.

Masterly inactivity, when the rights of my coun-
try are at stake! Why, sir, the idea is sacrile-
gious. There is, however, something superlatively
ridiculous in this idea of masterly inactivity and
bedchamber diplomacy. Why, run the one into
the other, and a jury of old women would declare
you deranged.

We are told to remain quiet, and that Oregon
will be conquered in our bedchambers. Sir, do
gentlemen forget that the bedchambers of our own
citizens are now in Oregon, unprotected; that they
are surrounded by the creatures of a foreign cor-
poration; that they cry aloud to us for protection
from the wilderness; and that it will be a burning,
scorching, blasting shame upon us, if we heed them
not?

It is true that we of the West have a particular
anxiety upon this subject, not because we look
upon it as a western measure, but because our
brethren, our friends, and our connexions, have
cast their lot on the other side of the Rocky moun-
tains. I know some of these people. They were
of those who helped us to reclaim one wilderness

—a noble, generous race—a race sent before the masses of civilized life, as the dove from the overcrowded ark. They come not back, but have pitched their tents in the Far West. Shall we not keep our covenant with them? Shall we not protect American citizens upon an American soil? For, notwithstanding the British minister has had most able assistance on this floor, where, I am free to admit, I think he had but little right to expect it, yet what has been the result of all our investigation? That the British pretence of title is like the baseless fabric of a dream; that it is only strong enough to be placed in words, by a species of contemptible special pleading, unworthy of the honorable representative of any honorable nation—disreputable in a county-court pettifogger.

I shall not argue the question of title at length. It would be an act of supererogation on my part at this time, after the able expositions which we have had, both from the Executive and in this Hall. But I must be permitted to allude to one position of the British minister; and I do this because, "in a nutshell," it shows a perfect specimen of the nature of the British side of this question. He says:

1. The American title is not good against Great Britain, because it is inconsistent with that of Spain.

2. The Spanish title is not good against Great Britain, because it conflicts with that of the United States; and

3. That hence the British title is good against both.

Here we have, sir, a new version of the old story of the borrowed pot. A lawsuit once took place, involving the question of damages on a broken pot; and the learned attorney of the defendant filed his defence as follows: First, that the pot was broken when he borrowed it; secondly, that it was whole when he returned it; and thirdly, that he had never had it.

No one denies our right to give this notice. Then why not give it? Among the many (to me) strange and incomprehensible reasons given by gentlemen against this measure, none is more so than that given by two or three of the gentlemen who have preceded me, and which is, in substance, that consistency requires of them that they vote on the side contrary to that of the venerable gentleman from Massachusetts; and yet I don't know but that this is as good an argument against the proposition before us as any which has been advanced.

Mr. Chairman, I thank God that I came here under no such magnetic influence, subject to be galvanized into positive or negative positions upon this great question by the action of others. It is enough for me to know that my country calls, and I go, regardless alike of those who shall go with me, and of those who shall prefer to lag behind.

Another grave reason given by one gentleman why we should not now act is, that John Bull, though an old bull, is a very stout bull at present, and that we had better wait until he falls further into "the sere and yellow leaf." Oh, my countrymen! has it come to this, that the American people are to be appealed to through their fears; and that, in a righteous cause, we are to await the natural decay of our adversary before we dare assert our rights to our own territory? The voice

of our people forbid it; and the bones of our ancestry would rise in judgment against us should we prove so derelict in our duty to our country; and the finger of scorn—bitter withering scorn—would be pointed at us by every republican on God's footstool!

Almost every one who has spoken agrees that our title to Oregon is clear and unquestionable; and the most of the anti-notice men express great anxiety to possess the whole of it, and would fain make us believe that, by refraining from giving the notice, time would be gained, and in the meanwhile our citizens would continue to pour into the country, and that these private companies and families would accomplish that which they in the most despairing tones assure us the whole force of the people's Government cannot accomplish—namely, the expulsion of the Hudson Bay Company. How preposterous a position!

Refuse to give this notice, sir, and who will go into this territory? True, many have gone there in the face of our joint convention, treaty of joint occupation, or trading copartnership, as gentlemen may please to call it; but they went there with full faith, believing that their Government would extend to them the protection which is due to every American citizen. Solomon says there is a time for all things; and now, sir, is the time to give this notice, or to tamely submit, cower, skulk, shrink, spaniel-like, before the menaces of a detested and overbearing adversary. Refuse to give this notice, and I ask, again, who will cast their lot in Oregon? Here an Englishman, there an American, and anon an Indian, with as many systems of government as there are individuals. Why, sir, we would be verifying, on a large scale, Shakspeare's idea of the witches' cauldron in Macbeth; and if the devil was not raised by such a mingling of discordant spirits, set me down as a false prophet.

We are asked how we expect to dispossess the Hudson Bay Company of her palisade forts in Oregon? Is it possible that an American can doubt upon this point? Prepare yourself and demand their surrender, as Ethan Allen did the surrender of Ticonderoga, "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." And this reminds me of the sneers of some gentlemen in relation to what they call our "western doctrine of manifest destiny." Do gentlemen reflect where they place themselves by these sneers? Do they forget that the Saviour of mankind has said that a "sparrow shall not fall to the ground without your Father?" And yet we are asked, where is the clause in Adam's will which gives us this territory? Apart from the "book-title," which is "clear and unquestionable," we see it written in letters of living light in everything which surrounds us—in that merciful dispensation, full of charity and love, towards the fallen children of Adam—of a just and omniscient God, who has given to man that control of the elements, the effect of which is to bring the remotest parts of our vast country into practical propinquity. The iron horse, (the steam-car), with the wings of the wind, his nostrils distended with flame, salamander-like vomiting fire and smoke, trembling with power, but submissive to the steel curb imposed upon him by the hand of man, flies from one end of the continent to the other in less time than our ancestry required to visit a neighboring city; while by the magnetic

telegraph, obedient to the will of man, he conveys the news of the day to the remotest part of the empire, and the bones of our ancestry would rise in judgment against us should we prove so derelict in our duty to our country; and the finger of scorn—bitter withering scorn—would be pointed at us by every republican on God's footstool!

Who, I am asked, will cast their lot in Oregon? Here an Englishman, there an American, and anon an Indian, with as many systems of government as there are individuals. Why, sir, we would be verifying, on a large scale, Shakspeare's idea of the witches' cauldron in Macbeth; and if the devil was not raised by such a mingling of discordant spirits, set me down as a false prophet.

The cry of the people, and some of the ablest of our men, have been raised in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress. And this reminds me of the sneers of some gentlemen in relation to what they call our "western doctrine of manifest destiny." Do gentlemen reflect where they place themselves by these sneers? Do they forget that the Saviour of mankind has said that a "sparrow shall not fall to the ground without your Father?" And yet we are asked, where is the clause in Adam's will which gives us this territory? Apart from the "book-title," which is "clear and unquestionable," we see it written in letters of living light in everything which surrounds us—in that merciful dispensation, full of charity and love, towards the fallen children of Adam—of a just and omniscient God, who has given to man that control of the elements, the effect of which is to bring the remotest parts of our vast country into practical propinquity. The iron horse, (the steam-car), with the wings of the wind, his nostrils distended with flame, salamander-like vomiting fire and smoke, trembling with power, but submissive to the steel curb imposed upon him by the hand of man, flies from one end of the continent to the other in less time than our ancestry required to visit a neighboring city; while by the magnetic

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telegraph the lightning of heaven is made subservient to the will of man in annihilating space. In storm and in darkness, in the heat of a torrid sun or the chilling blasts of a Siberian winter, this mystical symbol of man's intelligence speeds its onward way. Truly it may be said, that with the social influence of these two great inventions, all the people of this continent may be moulded to one mind. And what heart does not leap at the vision presented of this great territory peopled by one republican family? Would it be saying too much, that the magnetic telegraph may be compared, when extended, as extended it will be, over the length and breadth of our land, to the nervous system of the human body? The sensations of its remotest parts will vibrate upon a common sensorium, communicating its ray of intelligence to a common centre, to be sent to all other portions of our Republic.

Who, then, shall measure the limits of a confederacy of States like ours? Who, then, shall perpetrate that almost sacrilegious imputation upon the mercy of Heaven, and say that the blessings of this Union are spreading too far? What, then, will become of the cry that we do not want Oregon, because of its great distance? How agreeable the vision of State after State coming into this great temple of freedom, and burning their incense upon an altar consecrated to the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty.

The cry of some is that we are not prepared; and some gentlemen, in deprecating our weakness, and in eulogizing the greatness of England's power, have, in my humble opinion, made speeches much better suited to the longitude of Westminster Hall than to that of the floor of the American House of Representatives. I assert boldly, and without fear of contradiction, that we are now better prepared to wage a successful war than if we had been frittering away our substance during the long period which has intervened since the treaty of Ghent, in keeping aloft an immense navy, and a great and splendid military establishment. Why, sir, it can be established—I might almost say mathematically—that by husbanding our means, we aggregate our capacity for any emergency; and when that emergency arises, that this preparation in time of peace, constitutes the best, the strongest, and most reliable foundation for effective military defensive and aggressive operations.

Let the shrill bugle-blast break upon our ears, and from the mountain side, and valley's depth, prairie and wood, as if touched by the hand of magic, you will see the true sons of Columbia springing responsive to their country's call. The shrill whistle of the Scottish chieftain never called as ready and as determined a clan around his standard, as would rally under the Oregon banner. The people, the great masses, those whose servants we are, and whose orders the genius of our institutions demands that we should obey, are heaving, I might say, like the waves of that great ocean, to whose confines they demand the extension of the American republic. And, sir, as wave after wave of public opinion culminates and breaks into foam, when I look around me and see the danger into which some gentlemen here have placed themselves of being engulfed and buried deep, deep beneath the turbid waters, I would warn them, while

there is yet time, to spring aboard the ark of political safety.

Canute was so exalted by the flattery of his courtiers that he foolishly believed that he could, by his lordly command, stay the waves of the sea, and bid them, "thus far shalt thou come, and no farther."

As well might you attempt to roll back the tidal wave of the great Pacific ocean, as it comes thundering on the coast of the Oregon, as to stay this great movement, this progressive movement, if you please, of the American millions; and as a friend, I would here warn the "Canutes" of this House to cast their eyes upon land before the waves shall dash with spray their chariot wheels.

Great Britain founded her first pretensions to the northwest coast in an outrageous attack upon the rights of Spain; and, taking advantage of her weakness, bleeding from the effects of a disastrous war, she, under the lash of her superior power, extorted from Spain the Nootka sound convention, as the treaty is called, upon which her main reliance is placed in her claim to the Oregon territory.

The value of this claim, even in the eyes of *her own statesmen*, is shown by one of my colleagues [Mr. OWEN] to be such as to justify the charge that she has been guilty of the most unmitigated rapacity in the assertion of her claims to territory in all her negotiations with us. And it remains to be seen if American freemen will agree to be despoiled with the tame submission of the effeminate Spaniard. Hers is the robber's title, and thus it has ever been with her. This vaunted circle of British military posts, which some gentlemen have brought in review before us, with a view "to frighten us from our propriety," are but monuments of her rapacity and lust of power.

She yet lacks one link in the chain which is destined, if secured, to bind the world in her commercial fetters. That link is the key to the Pacific, washing, as it does, the shores of both great continents; and the command of this ocean is hers, and hers alone, if she is permitted to occupy the harbors which she has studiously claimed in every proffer of settlement which she has made of this question. It remains to be seen whether the cowardice of the descendants of the men of Bunker's Hill, and of those gallant spirits who conquered in our war of the Revolution, and of our second independence, shall permit her to grasp it. I blush at the bare suggestion of the possibility.

Mr. Chairman, it cannot, it will not, it shall not be! I have no disguises as to my opinion of our right. I am satisfied that it extends to 54° 40'; and the only shadow of right which England has, is based upon the discovery of the head waters of Frazer's river, in the extreme northern part of this country; but this she is precluded from by her own withdrawal of all claim except that based upon the Nootka convention, which has been fully shown to give her no territorial rights whatever.

I regret that the situation in which Mr. Polk found this question, trammelled by our treaties of 1818 and 1827, as well as the many previous offers of our Government, much, very much more favorable to Great Britain than the one recently made, and which admissions had been construed in the eyes of the civilized world into evidence of British title, induced him, or required him, to make that offer. By making it, however, he has shown to all the

nations of the earth the strongest evidence which can be required of a disposition to amicably adjust this vexed question.

I rejoice that England has refused it. Moreover, she has done it in such a way as to unite, in at least the district which I have the honor to represent, the great body of the Whig party with my Democratic friends, in sustaining me in going the whole length in the support of our title.

I am proud to declare to you, sir, and to the representatives of the nation, that in Indiana, at least, when a question of national honor is presented, the lines of party are broken as the slender webs which cross the path on a summer's day. Let an appeal be made to us in support of our national honor, and we at once resolve ourselves back into our original elements—the Republicans and Whigs of '76.

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